Green Fd.
Dec. 12, 1898

xx 13.38.30

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Prospect Hill Sept. 13th. 1775

Dear Shaw

I had this morning the honor of yours by Mr. Laurence — Why you dear dog, was there not time enough from the 21st. to the 29th of Augt. to write more than 7 lines? And more to inform me you intended to have sent me 4 or 5 lines by Captain Wharton —— If we were not, as I apprehend, on the eve of some important event, you should receive a Rowland for your 11½ lines; but as the case now stands & God only know what a chasm there may be in our Correspondence, will forget your unkind negligence & excuse you on the supposition that the Lovely Widow, had some willing commands for you to execute, & you know I allow every thing to give way to her Supremacy. —

I suppose Patton received a confused heap of lines wrote the Day we took possession of Plowd Hill, while the thundering of Cannon & whizing of 24 lb Bullets took up much of the attention of an unfleshed Soldier — he must on that score excuse all faults — That was on Sunday — in the evening the fire of the Artillary ceased and on Monday morning we saw the Red Coats busy in throwing up a Parapet within their former lines, but so much higher on the Hill that the Cannon Mounted there could fire at the same time & over those they had fired with on Sunday — this new Parapet had six Embrasures — On monday evening they threw four Bombs from their new Battery & a few Guns from it the old Battery & the Mud Lark in Mystic River without doing any harm —

2W Over against Bunker Hill on the other side of Mystic River is Winnisimit Hill at the foot w.h stands a large House & Farm called Chelsea, here we have ab.t 200 men as a Guard, but no Works or Cannon. On the Side of Bunker Hill next here & in full view, is the Regulars Tents, being on the opposite side & out of the way of our Guns on Prospect & Plowed Hills. — On the Top of this Winnisimmit Hill we had a parcel of Straw &c.a to set fire to as a Signal whenever they saw the Regulars in Motion — Accordingly on Tuesday about 10 o Clock we saw the Fire, our Drums beat to Arms, all our Lines were mann'd — & we Riflers were left at full liberty to range at large & take what ground we pleased — Col Thompson therefore posted us in the Seat of honor, that is, between all our Works & Bunker Hill, behind Stone Walls & in the Indian Corn patches, to receive & return with Interest their first fire & I think it impossible for men to behave better than our Riflers did — 300 of them lay in a Meadow, in full View of Bunker hill & within Point Blank Shot — "before their Eyes in opposition fat grim death" altho we lay in this position & the Officers with myself were walking about, viewing and marking the most advantageous ground to act upon they fired but seven large Guns & 30 or 40 Platoons of Small arms all the Day, some of which knocked the Stones about our Ears but hurt none of us except one Man a slight wound in the thigh — One 24 Pounder flew over our heads & killed a poor fellow walking along the Road half a Mile behind us — The alarm proving false, we marched home about Sunset & our

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placed a strong Guard of Musket Men in the lines since which every thing in that Quarter hath been quiet — We call 6, 8 & 10 Guns a day nothing & 3 or 4 Bombs are only sport, just enough to keep us from falling asleep — We have had several Deserters from Roxbury & from the Mud Lark in Mystic — 4 poor fellows came off at one time & swam to shore unhurt, amidst a thousand Shot, tho' they say it was agreed with their companions left on board to fire over their Heads. ——— You must now set down a few false alarms wch took us out of our Beds into the trenches at midnight, & some other matters of no great moment, until last Sunday, & I feel myself blush with shame and indignation at what I am forced to relate

Our Camp is seperate from all others abt 100 yards — all our Courts Martial and duty was seperate — we were excused from all Working parties, Camp Guards, & Camp duty — this indulgence together with the remissness of Discipline & care in our Young Officers had rendered the Men rather insolent for good Soldiers — they had twice before broke open our Guard House & released their Companions who were confined there for small Crimes — & once when an Offender was brought to the Post to be whipped, it was with the utmost difficulty they were kept from rescuing him in the presence of all their Officers — they openly Damn'd them & behaved with great insolence — however the Col was pleased to pardon the Man & all remained quiet — but on Sunday last the Adjutant having confined a Sergeant for Neglect of duty & murmering — the Men began again, & threatned to take him out — The Adjutant being a Man of Spirit, Seized the Principal Mutineer & put him in also — & coming to report the matter to the Col, where we

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all feting after dinner, — were alarmed with a Huzzaing & upon going out found they had broke open the Guard House & taken the Man out — The Col & Lieut Col with Several of the Officrs & Friends seized the fellow from amongst them & ordered a guard to take him to Cambridge at the Main Guard which was done without any violent opposition, but in abt 20 Minutes 32 of Capt Ross's Company with their loaded Rifles, Swore by G—d they would go to the Main Guard & release the man or loose their lives & set off as hard as they could run — it was in vain to attempt stoping them — We stayed in Camp & kept the others quiet — Sent word to General Washington, who reinforced the Guard to 500 Men with fixed Bayonets & loaded pieces — Col Hitchcocks Regt (being the one Next us) was ordered under Arms & some part of General Greens Brigade (As the Generals were determined to subdue by force the Mutineers & did not know how far it might spread in our Battalion) Generals Washington, Lee & Green came immediately, & our 32 Mutineers who had gone about half a Mile towards Cambridge & taken possession of a Hill & Woods, beginning to be frightned at their proceedings, were not so hardened but upon the General's ordering them to Ground their arms they did it immediately — The General then ordered another of our Companys (Capt Nagles) to surround them with their loaded Guns which was immediately done, and did the Company great honor — however to convince our People (as I suppose, mind) that it did not altogether

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altogether depend upon themselves, he ordered part of Col Hitchcocks and Col Littles Regiments to surround them with their Bayonets fixed & ordered two of the ring leaders to be bound — I was glad to find our men were all true and ready to do their duty except these 32 Rascals — 26 were conveyed to the Quarter Guard on prospect Hill and 6 of the principals to the Main Guard. — You cannot conceive what disgrace we are all in & how much the General is chagrined that only one Regiment should come from the Southward & that set so infamous an example; and in order that idleness shall not be a further bane to us, the General Orders on Monday were "That Col Thompsons "Regiment shall be upon all parties of Fatague (working parties) "& do all other Camp duty equal with any other Regiment"

The Men have since been tried by a General Court Martial and convicted of Mutiny & were only fined 20/ each for the use of the Hospital — too small a punishment for so base a crime — & mitigated no doubt on account of their having come so far to serve the Cause & it's being the first crime — The Men are returned to their Camp seem exceeding sorry for their misbehaviour & promise amendment. —— This will I hope awaken the attention of our Officers to their duty (for to their remissness I chaye our whole disgrace) & the Men being employed will yet no doubt do honor to their Province — for this much I can say for them that upon every alarm it was impossible for men to behave with more readiness or attend better to their Duty — it is in the Camp only that we cut a poor figure — Tomorrow Morning or some time in

in the Day may perhaps restore our honor, if we behave in the Day of Battle as well as I hope we shall — You must know that this is a conjecture of my own & founded on no better materials than a poor unexperienced judgement. ——

On Monday last Col Arnold having chosen 1000 effective Men, Consisting of two Companies of Rifle Men (about 140) the remainder Musketeers, set off for Quebec as it is given out (& which I really believe to be their destination) for we have intelligence that the Indians expect to have deserted from General Carleton & that he hath not more than 700 effective men in Canada all which except one Company is at St Johns & Montreal to oppose General Schuyler — If this should be the case & Col Arnold meet with a ready march Quebec will undoubtedly fall into our Hands — for those people who have gone to found the disposition of the Inhabitants report that they are generally in our favour, & that no opposition will be given by the Canadians to our measures.

I accompanied on foot as far as this Town of Lynn (9 miles) Doctr Coates who goes as Surgeon, Mr Matt. Duncan, Mr Melcher & several other Southern gentlemen as Volunteers — here I took leave of them with a wet eye — the Drums beat & away — they go as far as Newberry Port by Land from there they go in Sloops to Kennebeck River, up it in Batteaux & have a carrying place of abt 40 Miles (over which they must carry on their Shoulders their Batteaux & Baggage — Scale the Walls & Spend the Winter in

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Joy & Festivity amongst the sweet Nuns. —— Yesterday the Wind being high & the Tide driving in, a Boat with a Serjeant & 5 Men drove ashore and were taken by our People — the Serjeant seems a very intelligent person for his Station — he says a Vessel arrived at Boston a few days before & brought Answers to Letters sent out after the Bunker Hill Battle, but knows nothing of what they contain — he says that he was Orderly Serjeant a few days ago, & saw in Major Skeiffs Office (Muster Master or Commissary) a return of the killed & wounded at Bunker hill, being 1435 Men ——. It is amazing to me that so many were hurt there — for not more than 700 of our Men were in the Battle, but the most of them fired 30 Rounds, as they say — I must from this conclude that they will hardly attempt our Lines in the Day time, or without a very heavy Set of Artillery. —

Saturday 16th Prospect Hill

Here we are yet & all as peaceable as so many Lambs. I began this Letter in the evening & as we were ordered to lie on our Arms I kept on scribling until 10 Clock — On Thursday at firing the morning Gun we were ordered to Plowd Hill, where we lay all that Day — I took my paper & Ink along as you once desired I would, but found so much to do beside writing, that you had only a few lines manufactured (in the face of 18 battering Cannon) on a pile of timber intended for a Bomb-Proof & just where you see the ✕ a Bullet from the Fowey discomforted all my Beaus, altho' it did not come near me — I thot the Banquette a safer place & took my station accordingly just in the Angle of a Traverse & was as safe as a Thief in a Mill — but there was too much Noise for

8 Writing & the Generals appearing in Sight I that it not quite so decent a Posture for a Soldier, thrust my writing Materials under an old Blanket, shouldered my fuslock, & strutted with all the parade of a carefull Lad. — a Deserter is just taken in to General Greens — I attend & will inform you what he Says — a good hearty looking Lad from Limerick — it is deserters intelligence therefore please what Credit to it you please — he informs that there are 3000 Men on Bunker hill — that all the Grenedier and Light Infantry Companies are made up to their full Compliment & encamped there — all the Light Horse he Says are also on the Hill — but that they have no intention of coming out & keep very strong Piquets every night to prevent our Surprizing them — that great numbers of Deserters would come over, but the Soldiers are made to believe that a compact is agreed on between ours & their Generals to give up all Deserters at the end of the Campaign, & that they will hang without mercy all such as desert from them — he also says there is a great coolness between the Irish & English Soldiers, but I am apt to believe without any foundation — he Say there are Barracks going to be built on Bunker Hill immediately, by wch we conclude they intend wintering there, & that there is talk of 6 Regiments coming over to reinforce them — but that the People of Ireland have stoped the Admittance of all their Recruits — So much for this Lad — One came out this morning from Roxbury & brings nearly the Same intelligence except that he Says they are to give us Battle tomorrow, which we are always prepared for but don't believe a word of — they will not

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not catch us asleep come when they please.

I hate all hasty conclusions, & therefore am pleased with the modesty of my opposition in regard to the Battle I prophecyed on Thursday last — I had many concurring circumstances in regard to their uncommon movements to suspect something was going on — but as nothing has been done, I shall only say in future what has been actually done & not what may probably happen. —

I have many things that I could write & which I know would give you pleasure, or at least a right idea of this Army of 20000 men — but it would not do that the Letter should fall by accident into the hands of infidels or the Heathen — Such sermons, such Negroes, such Colonels such Boys & such Great Great Grandfathers. ———

This I may safely say, that such a cursed Set of sharpers cannot be matched — every article of Conveniences or necessaries, are raised to double the former price — but I hope a proper enquiry will be made before the accounts are passed — and that whatever falsehoods their news papers may be stuffed with will be disregarded.

Sunday Evening

All's well. ——— From my Tent door on this Hill I have a full view of all the Enemys Batteries & Works on Bunker Hill & also our own; about 8 Oclock this Morning I saw a small Cannonade begun by our people with two large Guns & were immediately answered by two from our Antagonists — our people gave them about a Dozen more & only received 3 in return.

what

10 What the matter was, or what occasioned so male a spell of smart firing I have not had curiosity to enquire — for I have been so busy in hearing a most excellent Sermon from our dear Mr Blair & in viewing some works on Leetmans point (I might as well have said Cul de Sac for any thing you will understand by it) that I had not before an opportunity of acquainting with attention — that I am tired & sleepy, wch you have no doubt concluded before you were informed. ——

Monday Morning

I am just informed by one of our Officers that General Schuyler hath taken St Johns by Assault with only the loss of 300 Men & that he hath taken 1700 Prisoners — this being post day I set off for Cambridge & if the news is true will put this in the Post Office contrary to my first intention to send it by Mr Willing but as there is no knowing when he will set off, cannot keep such good news from you a moment. —

Heath who informs me he is writing to you is to relate all the little nannygotes with that humour wch will make them agreeable — my department is more matters of fact.

Since I wrote the last two lines 20 Cannon have been fired at Roxbury & they are firing now ding dong. —

Genl. Washingtons 11 a Clk

The above St Johns account is all a false hood from first to last, & now I set my nose to Roxbury & will inform you why the Serpents fire so very

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briskly at Roxbury —

Roxbury 1o Clock

I met on my way hither a Brd. Volunteer Mr. David Dorsey of Maryland who informs me he is going to leave the Camp tomorrow morning for your City — the firing at this place was not occasioned by any Uncommon movement but just by way of Sport — we fired no Guns this morning — nor of 100 Guns which they have fired here one man been killed or hurt, altho, the Guard House & other Houses full of men have been shot thro' & thro' — the Wind of a 24 Pounder knocked down a man & horse, struck the Limb of an apple tree & threw it against Dr. Hubley knocked him down & did none of them any kind of harm, except frightening them soundly. —

Camp at Jamaica Plains 4o Clk

The firing at Roxbury hath ceased & all is quiet again. I came here from Roxbury with some of the Rifle Gent.n of that Division to ask Capt Crafts how he does who has been sick, & for no other reason as Smith can well inform you — Mr. Conner is with me & by his Compliments be put in to you & the Club & if I know any thing of the Matter, you might with all his heart, [illegible], if Mortal Man can say which that is — I now to conclude

if all this will not draw a line from you I can only
say you are a very lazy fellow, or that the widow hath
an undue influence on the friend of

Your Obl Servt

B Franklin

You need not write as I set off from
here before yours can possibly leave
Philada

To Mr John Shaw

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